

CHRIS WEST
Legislative District 42
Baltimore and Carroll Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 322
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3648 · 301-858-3648
800-492-7122 Ext. 3648
Chris.West@senate.state.md.us

District Office
1134 York Road, Suite 200
Lutherville -Timonium, MD 21093
410-823-7087

February 2nd, 2023
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Brian Feldman
2 West Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

Re: Senate Bill 007 – Environment – On-Site Wastewater Services – Board, Fees, and Penalties

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Committee,

It is a great pleasure to appear before the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee this afternoon to present Senate Bill 007. Let me emphasize at the outset that Senate Bill 007 has nothing whatsoever to do with James Bond. To the contrary, this very modest bill just makes several technical revisions to last year's House Bill 318 (codified as Chapter 419).

Both Chapter 419 and this bill deal with creating a licensing board for the septic system industry. Despite the use of the phrase "wastewater system" throughout the legislation, we're talking about septic systems, not community wastewater treatment plants.

The changes proposed in Senate Bill 007 are in response to issues that arose as MDE started to implement Chapter 419 and this bill has been developed in coordination with MDE. You will note that Senate Bill 007 is an emergency bill so that MDE can quickly proceed and meet the deadlines passed in last year's bill.

At various places in Senate Bill 007, the bill makes it abundantly clear that the regulatory regime set up by Chapter 419 only applies when property containing a septic system is about to be transferred to a new owner. Under Chapter 419, in such a situation, a person who conducts an inspection of a septic system when the property is about to be transferred is required to hold a valid septic system property transfer license issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment. At any other times that a septic system needs to be inspected, this regulatory regime will not apply.

Senate Bill 007 also redirects the modest licensing fees to a new entity to be known as the "On-Site Wastewater Professionals Fund. It further provides that any administrative penalties for violations of the law or regulations shall be paid into the Maryland Clean Water Fund. Finally, it slightly alters the composition of the State Board of On-Site Wastewater Professionals.

The changes reflected in Senate Bill 007 are all supported by the groups that worked so hard over several years to create an effective licensing board for the septic industry. The bill has no opposition.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 007 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee might have.